AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-12 – Cancelled.

13.   (New) A network terminating unit for receiving digital data via a communications link naming a signaling channel and at least one data channel, said signaling channel being operable to establish and control connections between said network terminating unit and one or more data sources via said communications link so that data can be transferred from the or each data source to the network terminating unit via at least one data channel, the network terminating unit comprising:

a processor arranged to detect messages transmitted on the signaling channel that contain at least partial data of a predetermined type, the detected messages comprising sufficient information to enable the network terminating unit to establish how parts of data of the same predetermined type sent in separate messages are linked to enable the network terminating unit to reconstitute the data:

means arranged to extract the at least partial data; and

means arranged to store the at least partial data for passing to a first destination device,

the network terminating unit being arranged to establish how partial data detected in separate signaling messages are linked and being further arranged to reconstitute the data from said plurality of signaling messages.

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14.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 wherein said at least partial data is reconstituted prior to being passed to a first destination device.

15.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising means operable to send at least partial data received for the destination device to further destination devices using messages transmitted on the signaling channel.

16.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 in which the communications link is provided via Integrated Services Digital Network equipment.

17.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 in which said at least partial data is a part or a whole at least one e-mail message or other textual message.

18.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 in which said predetermined type of said at least partial data comprises a software download data type, database search results, news information or telemetry data type.

19.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising means operable to detect whether the destination device is active so as to be able to receive the data and, if said device is active, to transmit the data stored by the network terminating unit to the device.

20.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising means operable to receive data from the destination device and to package the data in one or more signaling messages for transmitting the data to a further destination device.

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21.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising means operable to detect signaling messages indicating the set up of a connection to a predetermined destination device and in response to such detection to transmit the data stored by the network terminating unit to the predetermined destination device.

22.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising:

means operable to monitor the activity of the signaling channel and to send and/or receive the data of a predetermined type when the signaling channel activity is within a predetermined range.

23.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising:

means operable to send and/or receive the data of a predetermined type during a predetermined time interval.

24.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 13 further comprising means:

operable to estimate the time for transmitting data to a destination via the signaling channel and, if the time exceeds a predetermined threshold, to transmit the data to the destination using one or more of the data channels.

25.   (New) A network terminating unit as in claim 16 further comprising:

means operable to:

first, establish the number of messages to be transmitted to a destination device and transmit data representing said number,

second, identify the sender of each message to be transmitted to the destination device and transmit data representing each said sender, and

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third, transmit data representing the text of each message to the destination device.

26.   (New) A method of operating a network terminating unit for receiving digital data via a communications link including a signaling channel and at least one data channel, said signaling channel being operable to establish and control connections between said network terminating unit and one or more data sources via said communications link so that data can be transferred from the or each data source to the network terminating unit via at least one data channel, the method of operating the network terminating unit comprising:

detecting messages transmitted on the signaling channel that contain at least partial data of a predetermined type, the detected messages further containing sufficient information to enable the network terminating unit to establish how parts of data of the same predetermined type sent in separate messages are linked to enable the network terminating unit to reconstitute the data, and

extracting the at least partial data;

establishing how partial data detected in separate signaling messages are linked;

reconstituting the data from said plurality of signaling messages;

storing the at least partial data for passing to a destination device.

27.   (New) A method as in claim 16 wherein said step of reconstituting the data occurs prior to passing the data to a destination device.

28.   (New) A method as in claim 26 wherein the communications link comprises an Integrated Services Digital Network communications link, and said signaling channel is a D channel of an Integrated Service Digital Network communications link.

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29.   (New) A method as in claim 26 wherein the at least partial data of a predetermined type comprises a part or a whole of at least one e-mail message or other textual message, and wherein in said step of reconstituting said digital data into a whole form, the whole of said at least one or more e-mail message is reconstituted.

30.   (New) A method as in claim 26 wherein the data of a predetermined type comprises a part or a whole of a software download, database search results, news information or telemetry data, and wherein in said step of reconstituting said digital data into a whole form, the whole of said software download, database search results, news information or telemetry data are reconstituted.

31.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of detecting whether the destination device is active so as to be able to receive the reconstituted data and, if said device is active, to transmit the data stored by the network terminating unit to the device.

32.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of receiving data from the destination device and packaging the data into one or more signaling messages for transmitting to a further destination device.

33.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of detecting signaling messages indicating the set up of a connection to a predetermined destination device; and, in response to such detection

transferring the data stored by the network terminating unit to the predetermined

destination device.

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34.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of:

monitoring the activity of the signaling channel; and

transferring the data of a predetermined type when the signaling channel activity is within

a predetermined range.

35.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of transferring the

data of a predetermined type during a predetermined time interval.

36.   (New) A method as in claim 26 further comprising the step of:

estimating the time for transmitting data to a destination via the signaling channel; and, if

the time exceeds a predetermined threshold,

transferring the data to the destination using one or more of the data channels.

37.   (New) A method as in claim 28 further comprising the steps of:

first, establishing the number of messages to be transmitted to a destination device and

transferring data representing said number to the network terminating unit;

second, identifying the sender of each message to be transmitted to the destination device

and transferring data representing each said sender to the network terminating unit; and

third, transferring data representing the text of each message to the network terminating

unit.

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